

TITLE: James (Lesson 4)

TEXT: James 1:9-12

INTRO: "The Lord uses affliction to test our faith, teach dependence on Him, develop godly character, and equip us to comfort others (Rom. 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 1:4)." *C. Stanley*

I. (vs. 9) What about the Christian who lives in humble circumstances?

NOTE: "Testings are for our enlargement and for our enlightenment. They are also for our ennoblement." *John Phillips*

A. These are believers whose circumstances pulled them down.

NOTE: Scattered among the nations, living under oppressive economic conditions, and were officially the "have nots" of society. Some believe that economic status reflects God's favor or disfavor. This is simply not always the case.

B. James instructs these believers to rejoice because God has exalted them.

NOTE: Consider Mary (Luke 1:47-48). Our attitude should reflect the reality that we possess spiritual treasures because we are "joint-heirs with Christ". (Rom. 8:14-17)

II. (vs. 10-11) What about the Christian who is rich?

NOTE: "The trials that James has mentioned previously have no respect for status or wealth. Suffering is the great leveler of people." *Life Application Bible Commentary*

A. The rich need to recognize their mortality.

B. Riches can be deceitful.

NOTE: Luke 18:18-27; Matt. 13:22; Prov. 30:8-9

C. The rich believer is brought low in the sense he is identified with Christ.

NOTE: Isa. 57:15; Phil. 3:10; Matt. 23:12 A true believer has humbled himself before God. Lasting security is only found in a personal relationship with Christ. Jer. 9:23-24

III. (vs. 12) The key to happiness both now and in the future.

A. "Happy is the person who perseveres under trial."

NOTE: "blessed" (*makarios*) is the same word Jesus used in the Beatitudes in Matt. 5. Robert Jeffress writes: "The trials we face make us stronger so we'll be able to stand in the midst of storms." See verse 3-4.

B. "once he has been approved he will receive the crown of life."

NOTE: Given to those who endure the test of faith, evidence of eternal security and perseverance of the believer. This promise is given to the church at Smyrna in Rev. 2:10.

C. Notice the last part of verse 12.

NOTE: The key to experiencing victory over the trials in our lives is to draw near to the Savior who has already been there. (Heb. 4:15-16)

CONCLUSION:

Believers are like athletes enduring the race of life. The finish line is near. May we be able to say like the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 4:7-8 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."